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FM AMEMBASSY SEOUL
TO RUCNARF/ASEAN REGIONAL FORUM COLLECTIVE IMMEDIATE
RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 2563
INFO RUEHBJ/AMEMBASSY BEIJING PRIORITY 5044
RUEHML/AMEMBASSY MANILA PRIORITY 9094
RUEHMO/AMEMBASSY MOSCOW PRIORITY 9114
RUEHGO/AMEMBASSY RANGOON PRIORITY 2646
RUEHKO/AMEMBASSY TOKYO PRIORITY 5149
RUEHSH/AMCONSUL SHENYANG PRIORITY 3881
RUEKJCS/JOINT STAFF WASHINGTON DC PRIORITY
RHMFISS/COMUSKOREA J5 SEOUL KOR PRIORITY
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHINGTON DC PRIORITY
RUACAAA/COMUSKOREA INTEL SEOUL KOR PRIORITY
RHHJJPI/PACOM IDHS HONOLULU HI PRIORITY
RHMFISS/COMUSFK SEOUL KOR PRIORITY
RHHMUNA/CDR USPACOM HONOLULU HI PRIORITY

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SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: N/A

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SUBJECT: ARF DISASTER RELIEF EXERCISE: LIMITED ROKG
PARTICIPATION DUE TO BUDGET CONCERNS

REF: SECSTATE 122937

1. This is an action request. Please see para 6.

2. (U) Poloff delivered reftel demarche on November 25 to MOFAT Southeast Asian Affairs Deputy Director Lee Yong-joon. Lee said an interagency meeting is required before he could provide a response.

3. (SBU) On December 3, Lee stated that the interagency discussion had not completed. However, he stated budgetary and legal concerns as primary challenges faced by the ROKG. Because of these factors, Lee explained, the ROKG is likely to send a five-member observer team (made up of two MND, two MOFAT and one KOIKA official).

4. (SBU) According to Lee, unresolved legal issues regarding moving and/or replacement of equipment and military personnel on foreign soil hindered the ROKG from reaching a speedy agreement. In addition, MND budget for 2009 did not include this exercise; therefore, it would be difficult for MND to fully participate.

5. (SBU) As this exercise is a civilian-led effort, Lee said the ROKG tried to recruit the Fire Department but to no avail. The Fire Department pointed to budget limitation and lack of prior written notification for its inability to participate. Lee added that MOFAT also tried to engage KOIKA, but it will be awkward if MND is unable to send anyone.

6. (U) Lee inquired about the head U.S. participant. Please provide the head of delegation when available. ROKG POC for the ARF Disaster Relief Exercise is MOFAT Southeast Asian Affairs Deputy Director Lee Yong-joon. He can be reached at 82-2-2100-0129.

STEPHENS